

VOTING RIGHTS AMENDMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, how do we all get here? How do we get to be one of 435 people in the United States Congress, a great honor that it is to serve in this Congress?

Madam Speaker, we all get here because people vote for us, the American public votes. It is the essence of a democracy. That is what makes this country great. That is why we have sent soldiers to Iraq and other places, to try to give other people democracy and have people vote.

Forty-nine years ago, this Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. JOHN LEWIS, a Member of this Congress now, marched in Selma, Alabama, and was beaten by troopers to get the right to vote.

Even before that, students went to Mississippi and throughout the South—which was called the Mississippi Freedom Summer—to register people to vote and had to fight to give African Americans the opportunity to vote.

Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman were killed in Mississippi. They were Mississippi Freedom Summer fighters. I met with Andy Goodman—who was murdered down there—brother yesterday because a year ago, almost to the day, if not to the day, the Supreme Court, in *Shelby v. Holder*, ruled part of the Voting Rights Act unconstitutional. Our Chief Justice said it is no longer needed.

Well, he was wrong. It is needed. Everyone should be entitled to vote. There are issues about States, right now, denying people the right to vote—voter ID, Madam Speaker, long lines, ending early voting, different problems being placed before people to stop them from voting, that is anti-American, yet it is occurring in this country right now.

There is a Voting Rights Amendment Act proposed, right now bipartisan, but limited bipartisan. Mr. SENSENBRENNER and a few other Republicans—I can count them on both my hands—are cosponsors, along with Democrats, to pass a law that would require preclearance in States that have shown by actions—indeed, discriminatory practices—that would inhibit the right to vote and stop it before it becomes discrimination, but we have got just a paucity of Republican support.

I haven't been a sponsor of that act because the decision was we wanted to be bipartisan, and for a Democrat to be a sponsor, they had to bring a Republican along.

I went over here, Madam Speaker, and I talked to at least 15 different Republicans and asked them to be a cosponsor because I thought they should have been a cosponsor because I wanted to be a cosponsor, and I had to bring somebody with me.

It would have been easier to go to the South Pacific and find that airplane in the ocean than to find another cospon-

sor over here, so today, it is being opened up for Democrats to show that they want to be for voting rights. I will be added as a cosponsor today, and many, many, many other Democrats will be too. Madam Speaker, every Republican should join as well.

This is American as apple pie, to have a Voting Rights Act that gives the courts—the Justice Department—the right to go and have preclearance and stop discrimination before it occurs.

The Voting Rights Act amendment would create a new coverage formula to identify those States and localities with a recent history of discriminatory voting laws and practices that are still at high risk for continuing voting discrimination.

It would enhance the authority of courts to order a preclearance remedy, require greater transparency regarding voting changes, and clarifies the Attorney General's authority to send Federal observers to monitor elections in jurisdictions subject to preclearance requirements.

Those changes that the Voting Rights Amendment Act would make to current law would help prevent voting practices that are likely to be discriminatory before they have a chance to cause harm.

The House Judiciary Committee, of which I am a member, and particularly the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice, of which I am the ranking member, should have hearings immediately and pass this act now.

Forty-nine years ago, this Chamber historically passed voting rights, and now, we can't pass an amendment. In 2006, the House voted to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act by a vote of 390–33, which meant, on both sides of the aisle, great majorities were for it, but now that the Supreme Court has struck it down and said we need to modernize it by finding States in localities that are currently exercising discriminatory practices, we can't come up with a formula because, politically, it would harm, theoretically, one side more than the other.

Just as Mr. GUTIÉRREZ spoke earlier about immigration and how that is going to affect the Republican Party in the future elections, voting rights will affect them too, and it won't affect them positively because, if the party becomes a party that is against people of color and giving them the American right to vote, as well as opportunities for sound and logical immigration practices, which this country needs for labor, it will be a minority party forever.

I am not here to lecture the Republicans about what they can do to help themselves politically. I am saying what they can do to make America more America. Pass the voting rights amendment.

LINSLEY SCHOOL 200TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MCKINLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCKINLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 200th anniversary of the Linsly School in Wheeling.

Established in 1814, Linsly is a preparatory school committed to academic excellence and character development. The Linsly School was the first of its kind west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The school's founder, Noah Linsly, was born in Connecticut in 1772. With a law degree from Yale, he began his career at his alma mater. However, recognizing opportunity in this frontier town of Wheeling, Noah Linsly moved there in 1799 and, valuing the need for education, established a school for children.

At the time of Linsly's founding, Napoleon Bonaparte was still causing havoc in Europe. James Madison, the fourth President of the United States, was President; and the British troops had captured and burned Washington, D.C.

200 years ago, there were no phones, no cars, no buses, no trains, just a lawyer with a vision who moved to a small town on the frontier and donated all his belongings to help children get an education.

Reno DiOrio, Linsly's current president for external affairs, said it best when he said:

When one considers everything that has happened to our country and to our local community in the time period of 200 years—the Civil War, two world wars, the Great Depression, major floods in the valley, the civil rights movement—we are proud that Linsly has been able to adapt with the times, to persevere and overcome challenges, and to remain committed to its founding principles.

Linsly's motto—"Forward and no retreat"—has been reflected in their emphasis that the greatest accomplishment is not in ever failing, but in rising again after you fall. With this motto, Linsly has continued to believe that children should be challenged and pressed without the possibility that they will quit.

From the fourth President to the 44th President of the United States, Linsly not only has survived, but has thrived. Among its graduates are Federal judges, business leaders, professional athletes, authors, Congressmen, and college presidents, among others.

This little school in Wheeling—this little school in Wheeling, not Boston or Philadelphia—is the 25th oldest boarding school in the United States of America, and its reputation is spread internationally. Now in its 200th year, Linsly is welcoming students from 15 States and 12 foreign nations.

As one of Linsly's greatest benefactors once stated:

Linsly will, in years to come, influence the lives of hundreds of young people who will go forward to serve their fellow men.